

French casements, when opening, as they should and may do, inwards, are more easily cleaned than the sliding sashes, and possess the additional and well-known advantage of affording egress on to a balcony or lawn.

But there are buildings where arrangements for opening are not called for. Public edifices generally require only a small upper casement for ventilation, and in such there is greater scope for ornamental design in the division into panes.—a scope, indeed, that seems infinite. Nature suggests innumerable ideas and images, forms and combinations of forms, that could be worked up and introduced in perfect harmony with the style. There are geometrical designs in pointed buildings that would be equally applicable to the horizontal or classic. Whereas the cross-hatched, wooden grating now in use would be a discordance in any style. Without wishing to encroach upon Gothic design, I would ask, why should not the classic sash in public buildings,—our halls, galleries, churches, palaces,—have lines in all respects as agreeable to the eye as the cathedral window? Why should it exhibit such a paucity, such a dearth of design, imagination, and taste? Why should not geometry and nature be called in here as well as in Gothic Arabian, &c.? and why not seek our types also among the flowers of the field? How beautiful are some Arabian and Persian windows—the latticed casement of "cool kiosk and bower!" To the Gothic cathedral, the mid-day sun has "streamed through emeralds and topazes, dazzling the sight, tinting sombre crocket and pier with rainbow hues." And glass staining and painting, from the simplest bordering to the highest pictorial embellishment and illustration, is as applicable to the classic window as to the Gothic. It must be used, however, in a manner agreeable to the spirit of the day, and made to appeal to and gratify the judgment as well as the imagination. In reply to the various questions just started, the increase of expense could not be consistently urged, for such a consideration is as applicable to the Gothic as to the classic, and to other parts of the latter as to the window. Economy should not operate to the decoration of minor parts, and the neglect of the major ones. But economy has less to do with public than with private buildings, and it is at the former my remarks are chiefly aimed. Liberality is expedient in a public building, which should, at whatever cost, faithfully represent the institution to which it is devoted, and impress by analogy its image on the mind.

Our present mode, among other disadvantages, too much restricts us to certain proportions of window. I mean proportion of length to breadth. In short windows the sashes slide badly, and get out of order. Besides, large windows, as broad as high, or broader, look ungraceful. In the Tudor style the division, by mullions, into lights, more or less in number according to the width, gives more latitude in the general proportion, or renders almost any proportion pleasing; and in this it has a great advantage over the present system. In truth, many hints for improvement in our windows might be taken from Gothic buildings, both ecclesiastical and domestic. Of the grouping of windows they furnish us with excellent examples, from the early lancet window to the many lights of the Tudor style.

Attention to the due ornamentation of the window would render us more independent of columnar decoration in the general design of the edifice. A row of handsome windows, with appropriate dressings, would have a powerful effect of themselves, and give due character to the building, without any non-essential or adopted features; while more irregularity might, when requisite or useful, be admitted into the design: the window, for instance, might be placed with greater ease to convenience, provided we made it in itself an ornamental object. And further, windows would be handsome and effective objects independent of the dressings: at least, a very slight moulding would be all that, in ordinary cases, was absolutely necessary.

It is, perhaps, in the nature of things that picturesque beauty should, in some degree, fade before those scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, and improvements which add to the accommodation and comfort of life. It does so probably by an operation of the law of compensation: "for every thing you gain you

lose something, and for every thing you have missed you have gained something else;" and such, I consider, has been the case in reference to plate-glass. One square in a window, or a series of large squares, looks chaotic and elegant, and is appropriate to some designs; but generally it is not equal, in pictorial qualities, to some older methods, as every artist knows. I do not say that we should not avail ourselves of the discoveries and improvements of science: plate-glass may be, and is, very extensively used amongst us, even in Gothic and Elizabethan architecture; and we should gratefully receive from the hand of science what new material will contribute to the convenience and pleasure of our abodes; but amid the changing requirements of habit and usage, and their supply, we should not lose sight of the eternal principles of beauty. Beauty is also a want of our nature, and a regard for it should in some measure qualify, or at least modify, our use of new inventions. Many artists (by which I mean painters and sculptors) and other votaries of the abstractly beautiful, look, I believe, with a somewhat jealous eye on the present extensive use of plate-glass, and rather regret the disappearance of the old lead lights. And certainly whatever advantages the former possesses, the latter, it cannot be denied, were more picturesque. The architect differs from the painter, in respect of taste, chiefly by his having a greater regard for the useful, which the artist is too apt to lose sight of in judging of architectural works; but the architect should nevertheless have as strong a feeling for the beautiful as any other follower of the goddess, and he should secure the useful with as little sacrifice of beauty as possible.

Let us consider for a moment the respective claims of the old and of the present practice to our notice. Besides the minuteness of division, contributing, by means of contrast, to greatness of effect in the surrounding parts, the filling in of the old diamond panes was like adding an enrichment to the building: like tracery or tabernacle work, and their varied angles of reflection, it secured a play of light and shade, and produced a sparkling in the rays of heaven, a rebeaming of sun and sky, that might rival the surface of the glassy lake itself. I have seen effects on old lead lights in Italian churches, for which the elegance of plate-glass is but an indifferent substitute.

In the present method, on the contrary, the window opening is merely filled in with a rude cross-hatched wooden grating, by which it is divided into squares of conspicuous dimensions, and made to exhibit nothing but equal panes of glass and harsh parallel lines. Now, parallel lines are pleasing enough where, by means of the perspective, their distances appear to diminish, and the lines themselves to converge as in rustication, but in windows they are too short for this effect. When their distance is so small that the whole at a proper point of view would look like network or texture, these horizontal and perpendicular lines may also be tolerated: but on a large scale they have a bad effect, and must ever present in themselves a rude and commonplace appearance, inferior to that of almost every other arrangement. But the great objection is, that, in such division of a window, no mind, no artistic feeling, nor design, is manifested,—no law of beauty is recognised,—and the window is consequently cut off from all participation in the general character of the building, and has no relation to other parts of the design.

The practice I believe, however, originated, not so much in a narrow view of architecture, which should combine beauty with usefulness, as from a mistaken idea of beauty, for which, with some, simplicity is a synonyme. Now, simplicity is but an ingredient, and a subordinate one, of beauty. Many are the qualities that go to make up the beautiful: there must be a due subordination of parts,—gradation, contrast, variety,—intricacy, even, is a quality of beauty. Variety is the chief ingredient: simplicity and uniformity are qualities called in to keep it from running into confusion. It is a due balance of these qualities that produces beauty.

I am far from advocating a return to any ancient practice; but, a beauty having gone, I would suggest its loss as a motive for exerting the imagination to conceive a substitute, consonant with and worthy of our new means

and appliances. In doing this, the facilities presented by cast-iron should not be forgotten. I have seen the common sliding sash introduced even in buildings where the display of pure Greek design, rather than any adaptation of ancient elements or expression of modern purpose, was the object of the architect. Now there are some critical eyes so fastidious as to be offended by the association of a window of any kind with pure Greek design. I believe the window to be as proper as the roof, but the character of our sash is well calculated to foster prejudices against the whole.

Something different to the present window, I am convinced, our Anglo-Saxon architecture, in all its adaptations, demands. To me the rich antique dressings in most instances appear thrown away, for they only embellish, to say the least, a void—a nonentity. This is one of the few departments of the art in which we have no ancient example or model, but assuredly our present practice is opposed to those principles of adjustment which guided the ancients in every department of their works, and to the relations which essentially constitute architectural beauty. Had the Romans possessed our means, in the way of glazing materials, for filling up their window apertures, they would have brought a little more feeling and imagination to bear upon it; and something more of the magic beauty of form than we have exhibited would have resulted in their sashes. In fact, I believe the classic window affords the greatest scope for beauty, though it has hitherto had no place in our design. It is a germ of life, and grace, and expression, hitherto dead, and that has yet to be unfolded to the day.

It would seem as if architects generally felt the inconsistency of their treatment of the window; for, in competition drawings, we usually find the sashes are left out, as if they were not deemed likely to improve the design.—very different from the case of the Gothic window, which is considered essential, and is calculated upon and brought into requisition accordingly. In truth, it is only the effect of custom upon the eye that renders them tolerable in any harmonious design. In ordinary dwellings people of taste paint their sashes black, to render them less conspicuous.

Against what I have advanced it may be replied that the window as at present treated is sufficiently expensive; but it is for its due proportion only of decoration that I contend. My object is to show that the window is not treated according to its importance, and to urge its just claim to consideration. In order to distribute decoration justly, we should first consider what are the essential features of our architecture, and what the relative importance of those features, and bestow our attention in proportion to their merits. Windows, doors, chimneys, pitched roofs, and gables are the things we have to decorate,—which we should do before giving unessential decoration, or, in other words, introducing features which are purely for ornament. How often do we see windows mere perforations, while columns and pilasters, and other elements non-essential to the construction, are used as embellishments. A mere aperture, glazed in the rudest manner, will admit the beams of the god of day, but it is a dead feature, a dumb organ, and cannot be looked upon as an object of art.

SAMUEL HUGGINS.

THE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION.

THE room at Lyon's Inn, Strand, was very full at the opening meeting of the Architectural Association on Friday, the 4th inst., and the walls and tables exhibited a fair sprinkling of drawings and prints: the sketches of the class of design did not show so much improvement on those of last year as we should desire.

Mr. J. P. Seddon, one of the secretaries, read the report of the committee, which stated that the association was in a flourishing condition: there are now 150 members. A balance-sheet was not given. As to the Architectural Exhibition, it communicated the gratifying information that it had been visited by 10,000 persons, and that the receipts were nearly sufficient to cover the expenses. It proceeded, "Your Committee, convinced of the importance of an exclusively architectural annual exhibition, have thus, at a considerable expense